CHALLENGES OF STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH GOOD GOVERNANCE IN MALDIVES AND BANGLADESH : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A

SYNOPSIS

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Introduction

Maldives and Bangladesh are the emerging democracies in South Asia struggling for good governance. The former has got transformed from autocratic to democratic whereas later from authoritarian to democratic form of government. Although their political systems have tried to maintain good governance for long time under the umbrella of democracy but did not get success. Both the countries have fragile democracies which are key characteristics of South Asia which raise concern for peace and development. The South Asia comprises a vast geographical area encompassing India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. These states have colonial legacy as well as quest for democracy thus after decolonization these states have adopted democracy. Notably their attraction for the system is not sufficient for its proper establishment. Mini Pathak (2015) defines South Asian region as "most sensitive region of all the international sub- system". Because these states enjoy distinct shades of culture, tradition, religion, language and so on which are able to cause cooperation as well as conflict but in general have accelerated the problems which are multi- dimensional in nature[1]. Political Systems of Maldives and Bangladesh have been found in struggle for democracy, particularly since the emergence of democracy in 2008 in Maldives and in 1991 in Bangladesh which by the time got intensify and thus drawn attention of the entire world community. In Maldives since 2008 harsh conflict between the ruling and opposition political parties transformed democracy in a fragile form where Nasheed the first president of multiparty democracy, had to resign followed by the emergence of Yameen as virtual authoritative ruler. While considering Bangladesh it has been found that since the abolition of the military rule where all political parties are state sponsored, the BNP and AL became the two major political parties and two-party system was founded in the country. Notably unlike western concept of two-party system as an assurance of political stability, the system did not work in Bangladesh and the contest between them resulted in violence and chaos. Elections were conducted since 1991 fairly that got flawed in 2014 elections in Bangladesh. Currently Hasina's government has established one-party system through suppressing opposition and manipulating the democratic institutions. The political systems of Male and Dhaka are in similar ambiguous and risky political condition thus needed to be considered comparatively. Therefore in this study their political instability and fragile democracy will be analysed and

comparative study will be drawn from that. In the era of globalization which type of inferences come before the political development of these two South Asian states in the global village will also be discussed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Upadhyay, (2005)** - This article "Pakistan's Quest for Democracy: Problems and Prospects" throws light on the background problems of political system of Bangladesh when it was an integral part of Pakistan like constitutional unrest, weak and corrupt representative institutions, dominance of authoritarianism and elitism, weak social structure, ideological warfare, constant dismissal of elected government, feudalism and so on existing since its emergence as a sovereign state. The problems dispersed into two sections – internal and external problems. The internal ones include weak and disorganized Muslim League lacking in support, no experience of democratic tradition, unawareness among the subjects for the Vice Regal System and early death of Jinnah and absence of strong leadership. Prominent leaders like Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan have not made any democratic convention. In external factors the IMF, the World Bank and the US play crucial role for assuring democratic political system[2].
- **Country Level Evaluation Maldives (2010)** - The political system of Maldives since its independence (1965) has been introduced in this article named "COUNTRY LEVEL EVALUATION MALDIVES". Since 1968 its system had been characterized as a republic and parliamentary along with a very strong executive. From the first half of the 2000's decade demands for political reforms got intensified resulted in the foundation of a multiparty democracy (2008) along with Nasheed as its president. Although with the new form of government human rights have been tried to be protected but not get that much success. The legal system of Maldives got mixed with the Sharia Law as well as of the English one that makes the situation more controversial. Although the new constitution (2008) provides all the necessary social, political, economic even environmental rights to its subjects but human rights are still in danger[3].
- **Lewis D. (2011)** - The book "Bangladesh, politics, economy and civil society" shows the interesting and recognizable transformation occurred within Bangladesh in social, economic and political sphere from a newly born poor state to the one that is struggling to cope up within the

global village. How Bangladesh is trying to cope up with fragile parliamentary democracy and getting independence in food production along with constant economic growth has been clearly shown. Under some key ongoing issues like how does globalization affect poor states, international development industry and its long term effects, climate change and its devastating effects on people and environment and Modern Muslim majority nations and political crisis faced by them, Bangladesh get highlighted in world society. This could help in fitting a better and dynamic look of the world community to Bangladesh and its new young subjects. The introduction of Bangladesh as a failed state has also got conversed after going through the book. A comprehensive study has been reflected through the text[4].

- **Morrison 2012** This article "The Formation (and dissolution?) Of a Democratic Politics in the Maldives" highlights political journey of the Maldives from an authoritative rule of Gayoom to the multi-party democracy led by Nasheed. Political history of Maldives and its key rulers have also been enlisted. After winning the first multi-party election held in 2008 Nasheed faced a lot of economic and political crisis and while trying shorting it out. His government did not complete its tenure and after his resignation Waheed became the President. The writer sums up this article with enlisting the key determinants of the democratic revolution such as the Islamic Parties, external pressure, bargaining between the MDP and Gayoom's DRP[5.]

- **Rahman (2013)**-In the article "*Bangladesh Liberation War, 1971 shows fight for freedom of the East Pakistan (Bangladesh)* against the western Pakistan. India and Pakistan became independent in 1947, at that time Pakistan was divided into the East and the West Pakistan which were separated by some part of India. The eastern Pakistan that was once a part of Bengal India was being discriminated politically, linguistically and economically by the Western Pakistan. Due to the constant discrimination Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the nationalist Bangladeshi leader proclaimed free nation Bangladesh on March 26, 1971. To suppress the struggle the West Pakistan released troops that resulted in massacre therefore the liberation war was instigated. In 1970 a cyclone hit the nation and killed about 5000,000 people but proper relief measurements were not taken by the Pakistani government. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the leader of the Awami

League won national election in 1971 with majority but Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the chairman of the Pakistan people part rejected it that accelerate the war. Confrontation between Pakistan army and Bengali freedom fighters the Mukti Bahini began. Indian force helped the fighters not only in war training but also participated in the war against the West Pakistan under the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Finally on December 16th 1971 an instrument of surrender was signed by defeated Pakistani General Niazi and by the Indian commander General Aurora and Bangladesh became an independent nation. December 16 was announced as the victory day and March 26th is known as the Independence Day[6].

- **Pillalamarri, (2014)** - This article "The Geopolitics of South Asian Political Stability" is based on Robert Kaplan's view of the South Asian political stability from his essay the "Rearranging the Subcontinent". Kaplan's idea of relationship between geography and politics and culture appeared in his finest text "the Revenge of Geography" has been discussed. This article also throws light on Kaplan's viewpoint given in the article named "National Interest" that the qualities of groups influenced state. He emphasizes the study of the trajectory of a state consisting history, geography and culture. The article highlights that the diversity of culture, language and terrain of the South Asia resulted in various weak states like multilingual Austro-Hungarian Empire. He shows the artificialness of the South Asia's political geography resulted in emergence of Pakistan and Bangladesh along with the significance of Kaplan's concept based on human nature[7]
- **Rounaq (2014**)-The article "Political Parties in Bangladesh" provides a comprehensive detail of major political parties of Bangladesh along with their evolution, ideologies, organizational structures, leadership and support base. These parties are as follows: Bangladesh Awami League (AL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jatiya Party (JP) and Jamaat- e-Islami. The article starts with a brief theoretical significance of political parties in representative government. With the distinct role played by political parties in the developing states unlike western states the writer highlighted the need of attention towards political parties in newly emerged democratic countries. The studies break some of the core concepts of political parties of western states like two-party system helps in maintaining political stability, free and fair elections would bring regularity in

electoral democracy over time, political parties help in the development of organizational structure but not always . Evolution of political parties has also been discussed within various periods of time such as 1972 – 1975 (one party system), 1975-1990 (multi-party system) and since 1991 till present (2014) marked by two- party system.[8]

- (M**aldives Assault on Civil and Political rights 2015)-** In this article Amnesty International highlights the violation of civil and political rights under the Yameen government. Detention of opposition leaders and judges, unfair trails of Nasheed and other opponent leader the defence minister Mohammed Nazim, former deputy speaker and so on have also been shown. Freedom of expression and organization; and human rights has been brutally attacked under the Yameen regime[9].
- Tr**ansparency Maldives, (2015)** The article "A Troubled Future of Democracy: the Results of the 2015 Maldives Democracy Survey" is based on the primary data drawn from the subjects who revealed the features of the instable political system like tough confrontation among political parties, manipulating political institutions for political benefits, lacking democratic orientation and values among the subjects, the subjects were doubtful to the democratic institutions, leaders and political parties; and violence and elitism in Maldivian polity. The survey also mentioned a little improvement in political socialization and gender equality by the time[10].
- (**Country Watch 2016)** – This article "Maldives Review" provides comprehensive information of Maldives consisting social, political, geographical, historical, and economic and so on. The Sultanate rule particularly from 1887-1965, the Gayoom's dictatorial rule of 30 years, foundation of multiparty democracy in 2008 and its instability followed by reemergence of authoritative government under Yameen's rule have been shown.[11]
- **Kumar (2016) -** This book "Multi-Party Democracy in the Maldives and the Emerging Security Environment in the Indian Ocean Region" gives a comprehensive overview of the internal political instability of the Maldives as well as the geo-political position and problems related to it. The whole constitutional evolution of the Maldives from 1931 to 2008 has been shown. The democratic transition from the thirty years' Gayoom rule to the multi-party democracy has been elaborated. Nasheed's resignation followed by Waheed's government that was replaced by

Yemeen' government in 2013 has also been mentioned. Yameen's rule started emerging as an authoritative rule has also been shown. [12]

- **Maldives (2016**) – Final WWL 2019 Country Dossier/ Embargo - This article focuses on the religious fundamentalism or better to say the Islamic fundamentalism and its influence on political system of Maldives. How political parties use the religious sentiments for their political benefits without considering its devastating results has also been shown. It is notable that officially the country is recognized as a Muslim one. The real data of the Christian minorities have not been mentioned but the WCD 2018 estimated the Muslim population at 98.6% in the Maldives. In the ranking provided by the WWL 2019 of Short and Simple Persecution Profile the Maldives ranked at 14th with 78points score. This article further lays attention on the three very types of persecution – Islamic Oppression, Dictatorial Paranoia and organized corruption and crime which are intensifying by radical Islamic preachers and conservative government. Minorities face discrimination at private as well as public and national level[13].
- **Riaz A. et.al (2016):** The book "Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Bangladesh" says in the article that the state Bangladesh remained in political turmoil resulted by the Weak political institutions, fragile democracy and religious fundamentalism. Religious minorities are in danger in the Muslim majority country. Ali Riaz in "political Parties, elections and party system" says that there are many political parties in Dhaka but two parties the BNP and the AL dominated the most and established two-party system. Undemocratic organization of intra-political parties, clientelism culture in government, and uncontrolled dominance of party head, fragmentation of parties and building alliances have been seen. In Bangladesh bureaucracy is often defined under military and quasi – military rule; and Civil military alliance is made to enjoy authority in "Public administration and bureaucracy" of Habib Zafarullah and "civil- military relation" of Al Masud Hasanuzzaman.[14]
- **Robinson (2016):** In the book "The Maldives: Islamic Republic, Tropical Autocracy" Gayoom's thirty years of dictatorial rule followed by establishment of democracy in Maldives has been discussed. The revolution for democracy was led by an environmental activist, journalist, and politician – Mohamed Nasheed. His struggle for human rights and democracy as well as against

climate change draws the attention of the entire world community on the archipelago nation. But his dream did not get fulfilled and authoritative government that is deeply rooted in the nation came back with backlash effects. Democracy replaced dictatorship but seemed not suited in the Islamic nation as it carried nothing but violence, political instability and intense political divisions. The outdated authoritative elements backed by the security forces and Islamic fundamentalists made the Nasheed government fall in February 2012.[15]

- **Samatha (2016)** - The democratic transition has been described in this article – "Political Developments in Maldives". The elitist dominating regime of the independent Maldives established in 1965 was replaced in 2008 by democracy. thirty years' Gayoom rule was witnessed of political persecution, imprisonments and killings were reported which followed by mounting pressure for democratic reformations which was accepted in 2004.Under multiparty democratic constitution various rights were given but due to lack of coordination between government and opposition the political development did not get established. During the period judicial reforms was needed, religious extremism, social and health care and security were required to be tackled.[16]
- **State Government Documents (2017**) - "Maldives" in the article the law and order of Maldives has been discussed. Firstly the whole political system of Maldives has been explored descriptively such as multiparty constitutional democracy with the Bill of rights and separation of power. Following this the loop holes in law and order of Maldives have been shown like arbitrary arrest, unauthorized recording of telephone conversation, restriction in right to expression in practice and religious rights, unequal treatment of women rights, violations of human and workers 'rights[17.]
- **Khan (2018),** Democratic transformation in Bangladesh is discussed in the book named "The Politics and Law of Democratic Transition: Caretaker government in Bangladesh" through the lights of electoral politics and malpractices. Long struggle for freedom, developments, equality, liberty and rights of the nation since its independence have been mentioned. The BNP and the AL since 1991 ruled Bangladesh by the time but one major mistake was done by the BNP of boycotting 2014 elections because of having doubts on the Caretaker Government (CTG) who

organized elections since 1991. This resulted in clean swipe of the AL. Later on with the dismissal of the CTG, the AL started regulating all walks of politics to assure its feet in authority. Four elements of Bangladeshi vision are nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism being seen since its liberation (1971); are in danger constantly or better to say are in vulnerable condition. Religious fundamentalism became a curse in the road to manage plural society[18].

- **Rounaq (2018)** - In this article "Political Parties Movements, Elections and Democracy in Bangladesh" the writer gives a brief description of changing party system in Bangladesh. Awami League (AL) founded in 1949 led the Bengali nationalist movement. Since November 1975 to 1990 the nation witnessed military rule with state sponsored political parties. During the period Bangladesh were ruled by two autocrats named Major General Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981) and Lieutenant General Hussain Muhammad Ershad (1982-1990). Both the despots used the Islamic sentiments and subsequently Islamist groups rehabilitated. In May 1981 Zia had been assassinated and his widow Khaleda Zia started taking part in the movement of bringing military rule to an end and also became the chairperson of the BNP. Ershad (1982-1990) became the next dictator. Eventually the AL and other political parties like the JI joined the pro-democratic movement. Subsequently Ershad had to resign on December 1990 and in February 1991 a parliamentary election was organized by a Non-part Caretaker Government (NCG) for the transformation from military to democratic rule. Here the author also threw light to the role of political parties in establishing democracy in Bangladesh. She further showed the hope for a stable democracy under the two party-systems with the AL and BNP. The BNP by the time got vanished with the constant rule of the AL in recent years. The constant rule could not be characterized as democratic but include several malpractices. At the end she described the organization and management within various political parties as undemocratic because of its authoritative selection of leaders and candidates, low representation of social diversity, undemocratic policy setting within parties, unconstitutional campaigns and party funding and party induced violence[19].
- **ZAMAN (2018**) - This article "Bangladesh Events of 2018" focuses on the violation of human rights and right to speech and association. In Bangladesh how the sheikh Hasina's government

backed by military suppressed and detained opposition parties' members; brutal repression and of peaceful protesters; and imprisonment and extrajudicial killings of journalists who raised voice against the existing government have discussed. To short out the problem of Rohingya refugee international pressure over Bangladesh also has been discussed. The government has framed such laws that could assure the continuation of its government. To ensure the rights of labour and women governments' initiatives have been discussed along with its grand limitations[20].

- **Fair (2019)-** In this article "Bangladesh in 2018: Careening toward One- Women Rule" Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's move towards an authoritative government through controlling freedom of speech and press, and stacking the courts and the election commission has been shown in detail. In 2014 election she co-opted with security forces resulted in deployment of security forces and many killings have been reported. She framed various laws like the Information and Community Technology Act, Digital Security Act through regulating media and public expressions; and in the name of war on drugs fake persons were gunned and detained to ensure her absolute position in power. She cleverly negotiated with Hefazat-e- Islam an Islamist group and recognized the degree offered by Qawmi Madrassahs and in return got successful in modernizing curriculum of madrassas. By these steps she successfully breaks the ties of the old ally of the Islamist Parties and the BNP. She failed to short out the problem of Rohingya but effectively managed the economy better than its neighbors like India and Japan[21.]
- **Mehedi (2019)** – This article "Bangladesh Events of 2019" starts through highlighting the Awami League government's disinterested attitude for enquiry of national election irregularities. International standards of human rights, freedom of speech and association and calls for enquiry of the election are continued to disregard by the Hasina's government. Lack of accountability in the government, problems of refugee and human women and indigenous rights continued. International pressure for improvements has also been shown at the end[22].
- **Parvez (2019)** The political system of Bangladesh has been suffered by undemocratic political party system, clientelistic politics, corrupt political leaders and constant struggle between ruling and opposition with no hope for negotiation. The AL and BNP have often been found while utilizing various ideologies resulted in fraction Bangladeshi Politics such as Bengali vs.

Bangladeshi, pro vs. anti-liberation war, and Islam vs. Secularism. These political practices create and nourish division to gain support. William B. Milan well pointes out for the political leaders says "winning is not just everything, it is the only thing… political leaders and their parties have had no inhibitions about creating crises of almost any nature and dimension to gain or regain office… for many years, Bangladeshi politics has resembled a bare- knuckle fight-bloody, vicious, without rules, and sometimes fated." Mohsin & Guhathakurba also commented that "Conflicts between the AL & BNP were more about power sharing than anything…."[23].

- **Riaz (2020) -** In the article "Bangladesh's Authoritarian Shift" the author shows absolute control on the political system of Bangladesh especially since manipulated election of December 2018. The election is defined as inconsistent by international media. The Opposition specially the BNP failed to turn the ruling in the favour of democracy owing weak strategies. Due to weak opposition, error of parliament to oversight the executive and lacked accountability mechanisms the executive started as an authoritative government by the time. Its claim to provide economic growth got doubted as flawed and along with government's more reliance on force resulted in emergence of fragile democracy[24].
- Hassan S. (2020), - In the article "Bangladesh", the writer shows Bangladesh's position as one of the fastest growing nation continued in 2019. This growth would be constant if the Bangladesh's government address the problem of public bank sector, Rohingya issue and concerns resulted by India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)[25].

RESEARCH GAPS

- The political systems of the Maldives and Bangladesh have been studied independently; these researches throw light on various aspects like evolution of political system of Male and Dhaka, their political parties and party systems, revolutions for democracy, misuse of authority by the concerned governments and fragile democracy of the nations. But the research findings are scattered thus lacking in consolidation.
- Notably there is also not any comparative study which could analyze the similarities and differences of the political systems of these small, newly emerged democratic and Muslim dominated states.

- The role of external factors such as globalization as well as internal factor as virtual authoritarianism accelerating the political instability have not been mentioned in former studies in a deep analytical way so that concrete and comprehensive results could be drawn. Due to the lack of meticulous research analyses, solutions to tackle the political turmoil in the two nations are at stake.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Almond and Powell (1966) Parts of political system like legislature, executive and judiciary work interdependently and their activities are interrelated so being found in the political system of Maldives and Bangladesh. One part generally executives of the two nations either directly or indirectly enjoy control over the others particularly in one party system, as happened in Maldives in Gayoom and Yameen era and in Bangladesh under the military rule of General Zia and General Ershad and in current Hasina's rule. For a proper adjustment among these bodies and stable political system; separation of power and check and balance (Montesquieu), mature, economic development and educated citizens (J. S. Mill) are necessary.[26] Easton says that political system works within various environments he mentioned particularly economic, cultural, socio-structural, demographic and so on and the both enjoy influence over each other although the political system enjoys some coercive power. In the political system of the Maldives and Bangladesh many similar set of relations and features have been found. In Structural Functional approach it has been pointed out that a structure of political system perform functional as well as dysfunctional role such as political parties, pressure groups, executive, and military and so on. This has been reflected from the political system of these two states- Maldives and Bangladesh.[27]

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ongoing postmodern era of globalization is characterized as the triumph of democracy which is defined as a guarantee for peace, development and stability through good governance. This assures the political system featured by consensus-orientated, accountable, transparent, responsible, effective & efficient, equitable & inclusive and rule of law. Liberties and rights along with justice and equality have been gifted under the new system. After the World Wars decolonization had been started which led the emergence of new states as sovereign ones. Those old Colonial States' political and economic

system particularly got deeply influenced under the alien rules. Due to the earlier colonial legacy and its rooted effect even after the breakdown of the rule their political system had been pasted in the totally new laboratory with no earlier direct experience of making the democratic system successful. Political socialization, political culture of the third world nations did not help in the proper political development. These peoples came from the traditional monarchical feudal society to the democratic one in which they have their due political role to play but as the people were totally unaware of the political system and struggling from various problems like poverty, illiteracy, past bad experiences of colonialism and so on, thus started depending on their political system absolutely for their political development. The newly emerged systems were also not that capable to articulate all the demands of their subjects. These factors pushed the political system of Male and Dhaka in political Turmoil. Notable point is that after almost five decades the problem remained same even got intensified. Along with these above mentioned issues globalization influenced the systems in dynamic, comprehensive and complex way on which the nations have not that significant limit. To analyze the reasons behind the problems along with the key solutions a comparative study will be conducted between the two systems of Maldives and Bangladesh. In this study the implications of globalization on the systems will also be drawn which will make the research more comprehensive. Thus to study the deep down causes and factors behind the political instability in these two states and find out solutions which could be generalized in the South Asia the topic will be taken. This research will be useful in assessing the factors affecting stability in the two countries of Maldives and Bangladesh therefore the present topic on "Comparative Study of The Political Systems of Maldives and Bangladesh Since 2015 to 2020" has been chosen for the research.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study through analyzing the factors responsible for the emerging democratic political system of Bangladesh and the Maldives and finding of solutions drawn from the comparative study of both the nations; contribute a lot at each level such as global, international, regional, national and local. Generalized concepts could be formulated that will help to tackle the same problem existing in other similar nations and to provide a peaceful and developed global political society. A stable political system could easily manage the emerging extremist and fundamentalist elements and short out the

problem of terrorism which started taking their feet in the South Asia particularly in the Muslim states. The problem of immigration and human rights could also be addressed if the political systems of these states get matured. At the national level the citizens of these states will easily articulate their interest from their capable[28] political system and could use their rights and liberties which seem meaningless in the chaotic political environment.

Various narratives of relationship between economic growth and political stability will be checked and reframed within the South Asian system.[29]and they could have a better living stander. In the research of the two South Asian states many old narratives will be replaced by the new ones.

KEY TERMS: Political System, Party System, Democracy and Good Governance.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the democracy and good governance in the political system of the Maldives;
2. To examine the democratic political system and good governance of Bangladesh;
3. To study the impacts of globalization on the political systems of the Maldives and Bangladesh;
4. To compare the political systems of the Maldives and Bangladesh;
5. To examine the factors responsible for the upheavals in the political systems of the Maldives and Bangladesh;
6. To identify the factors required for strengthening the political systems of the Maldives and Bangladesh.

HYPOTHESES

1. The democratic political system of Maldives is struggling for good governance;
2. The democratic political system of Bangladesh is transforming as virtual authoritative government under one party system;
3. The political systems of Maldives and Bangladesh got significantly influenced under the umbrella of globalization;
4. There are similarities and differences between the political systems of the Maldives and Bangladesh;

5. Elitism and lust for power along with immature political parties are the major causes behind the political turmoil in these states; and
6. Matured democratic institutions and sense of responsibility among political parties could bring stability in the political systems of Maldives and Bangladesh.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design: Descriptive and Analytical.

2. Sources of Data collection:

Secondary Sources: - Data will be collected from secondary sources like books, journals, articles, research papers, newspapers, reports of organization and authentic websites of internet and documents etc.

CHAPTERIZATION-

1. Introduction
2. Democracy and Good Governance in Maldives;
3. Democracy and Good Governance in Bangladesh;
4. Globalization and political systems of the Maldives and Bangladesh;
5. Comparison of the Political Systems of Maldives and Bangladesh;
6. Factors responsible for upheavals of the democracies and good governance in the political systems of Maldives and Bangladesh;
7. Factors required for strengthening the democracies and good governance in the political systems of Maldives and Bangladesh;
8. Conclusion

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